

The Light - Junior Series
Lesson 74

Zaccheus
Grace vs Works



2013

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

If YOU have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have the opportunity to do so right NOW. Simply tell God the Father that you believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, who loved us so much that He came down from heaven and became a man to take our place and pay for the penalty for all the sin of all mankind. Jesus, the Savior died on the Cross for your sins and the sins of the whole world. Then Jesus was buried but He rose again and He is alive today seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. When you make the decision to believe in Jesus in simple faith based on His work on the Cross, you are now a believer and will always be a child of God. When you die, you will spend eternity with Him in Heaven. ***(Acts 16:31) "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." (John 3:16) "God loved the world so much that He gave is One and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."***



Lesson

We just finished a lesson about the rich young ruler but the story doesn't stop there.

The rich young ruler came off as being sad because he didn't want to give up his money and follow the Lord. This makes him seem selfish and spoiled, doesn't it? Maybe he thought it would be too much for him to do what Jesus asked him to do. Well he was right!!! HE couldn't do it. His and our ability to obey God MUST come from the omnipotent POWER of GOD. It is ONLY the omnipotent power of God that gives a boy or a girl what it takes to set us apart to serve Christ after salvation. We cannot do it...PERIOD!!!! The rich young ruler thought he could do everything on his own and he was dead wrong AND he didn't want to change.



So let's NOT stop the story there...let's press on!

If we are honest, from time to time in our relationship with the Lord we all come to a point where we look at what the Father wants us to do and we just say "no, no I can't and I won't". At that moment of our inner rebellion, we are just like that rich young man. We realize that we DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES to do God's will! We are the rich young man, too. Then if we're at all sensitive we get upset and sad just like this rich young man did...the one that Jesus looked at with eyes of love.

And you know what? He looks at you with those same eyes of love during those same moments of rebellion and sadness in your life. But instead of staying sad, Jesus invites us to go somewhere else. This story invites us to go into the death of the cross where Jesus did it ALL for us!!! Then let's go to His resurrection...that's God's power and His grace!

*That I might come to know Him
And the power of His resurrection
And the fellowship of His sufferings
Being conformed to His death*

Right after the story of rich young man, we are told that the group, Jesus and His disciples walked on toward Jerusalem and as they walked Jesus begins to tell them about His death and His resurrection. **Mark 10:32-34 "They were on the road going up to Jerusalem and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, (33) saying, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man (Jesus) will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles (Romans). (34) They will mock Him and spit on Him, and terrorize Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again.'"**

We recognize that we are like the rich young man sometimes and we feel sad. And that sad feeling, if we're paying attention, should drive us to Jesus' death and resurrection. We are the sad rich young man and the only way out is through the crucified and risen Christ who lives in us, and we in

Him. We die weak. We are raised strong in HIM.

In Luke's passage after Jesus foretells His death and resurrection, He has another encounter but this time it is with a fellow by the name of Zaccheus. He is also rich. He is the rich **older** man. **Luke 19:1-10** "Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. (2) And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich (because he cheated people). (3) Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was a short man. (4) So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way.(5) When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, 'Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.' (6) And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly. (7) When they (the Pharisees and Scribes) saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, 'He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.' (8) Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, 'Behold, Lord half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.' (9) And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham (a Jew). (10) For the Son of Man (Jesus) has come to seek and to save that which was lost.'"



This rich older man was simply trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable to see him because he was a short guy! So he kept on running and finally decided to climb up a tree so he could see Jesus. He was seeking an answer to his problem...being a sinner!!! This rich one is **older and wiser**. So he does not go away sad but he keeps going on ahead until something from God is provided for him...salvation!

The rich **young** man was scared and sad at this point because he was afraid and worried that he may never be able to change himself in this area and this possibility embarrassed him. He relied on the works method instead of the grace method Jesus was trying to get him to try. He walked away and lost out.

On the other hand, Zaccheus, the rich, **older and wiser** man, has been fairly convinced by life that he cannot change himself. He wasn't into works. He needed grace and Jesus had plenty of that!!!

The thing about the rich young man is he probably had this money by inheritance. On the other hand, Zaccheus was a tax collector, and a chief one at that. A chief of sinners. And it was by his own efforts, his own scheming and cheating that he made this fortune. So he was totally convinced that he **could not change** himself. He knew himself and he knew he would not change on his own. He knew he was a sinner and he realized that the decisions he made caused consequences in his life. He knew he had made a mess of his life. This is a TOTAL contrast to the rich **young man**. So Zaccheus kept running ahead seeing if perhaps God (Jesus) would be on the scene to provide what was needed to change his life.

Then Jesus looked up at Zaccheus, and that is what made all the difference. Sometimes we just have to notice how Jesus is looking at us. Remember Jesus is omniscient...He knows our thoughts and he knew Zaccheus was seeking Him for the answers.

The solution is Christ staying at your house...a personal experience of the His indwelling. **John 14:23** "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves me, he will keep (obey) my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.'"

When we move from the rich **young** man to the rich **older** man, Zaccheus, we go from "what do I have to do" (works) to simply running, and wondering what the Lord is going to do for me (grace). If we let Him, Jesus will do everything for us and we need that. And KNOW that He will do that for us! Let the Lord be at home in your heart. Welcome Jesus into your home like Zaccheus did to his home.



The first words said on that day are from Jesus, not Zaccheus. Jesus reaches out to this Zaccheus who remember was a short man who was having trouble seeing Jesus in the crowd but he knew He was important. Jesus comes to him. Remember with man it is impossible but with God all things are possible. So whenever you come to your "I just cannot do it, it is impossible for me" moment, keep in mind that Jesus has come to SEEK and to SAVE that which was lost. This is part of who He is. This is His job description.

Just like with the GPS device in your car, God is always recalculating the route when we go the wrong way or reach a dead end...our own ability to follow the plan, run the race, and out of gas. And the route He recalculates is always Christ.

Kids, we need to learn to trust Christ for everything. God put everything right under our feet. He has spread a table before us with everything we need for our spiritual life. And we can take all we want at the feast He laid out for us. TAKE IT!

But if we live only in ourselves, we struggle and we're needy still. Instead of that, we are supposed to live by faith that life that is totally pleasing to God. There is no question about whether Christ can do it because He has already done it for us. We just need to take it. **Philip 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens (enables) me."**



Close in prayer

Prepared from Pastor John Farley's lesson on January 15, 2012
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Read and tweak before sending to John.